

Report from Western Division, Canadian Association of Geographers

Submitted by Claire Hay, Past President (Claire.Hay@ufv.ca)

Please find below the annual report from the Western Division, Canadian Association of Geographers. In this report you will find a summary of our successful virtual annual conference, notes from Executive meetings and a report from the AGM that was held during our annual meeting in March. Details of the current Executive are also provided. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Report from the WDCAG Annual Meeting

The 61st Annual Meeting of the Western Division, Canadian Association of Geographers was hosted by the Department of Geography and the Environment, University of Lethbridge under the direction of Dr. Craig Coburn on March 5-6, 2021. Due to COVID-19, this was a virtual conference. There were 341 attendees making this the largest WDCAG conference on record. It seems that there was a great appetite to talk all things geography even in a virtual setting. On the Friday evening, attendees participated in a keynote Address titled "*Biocultural Nation Making: Biopolitics, Cultural-Territorial Belonging, and Canadian National Protected Areas*" presented by James Stinson (York University) and Libby Lunstrum (Boise State University). Throughout the Saturday, participants could choose between 16 paper sessions (61 papers), and 5 poster sessions (11 posters). Special sessions on Borders and Migration, Indigenous Perspectives, Inuit Studies, and Insect Decline and Conservation were also included.

As is tradition at WDCAG conferences, awards were presented for best poster and paper at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral level. A huge thanks to all the faculty who adjudicated papers and posters for our student presenters. The diversity and level of work being completed by student researchers is outstanding and we thank them for including us in their learning journey. This year's award winners are:

Undergraduate Poster: Rachel Stewart-Dziama (University of Victoria) "Problematic polygons: Alternative cartographic representations of Indigenous territories"

Undergraduate Paper: Mackenzie Ross (University of Victoria) "Is anyone out there? Can signature in-person field school learning outcomes be achieved online?"

Masters Poster: Melina Sorensen (Royal Roads University), "Predicting the ecotoxicological impacts of microplastics in the Salish Sea using GIS."

Masters Paper: Annie Pumphrey (UNBC) "Who bears the brunt? An examination of 'bear jams' in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, Alberta"

PhD Poster: Anne-Cécile Delaisse (UBC) "The 'in-between' role of the Francophone community for French-speaking immigrants in Metro Vancouver"

The WDCAG Executive speaking on behalf of the membership extends its sincere thanks to the faculty in the Department of Geography and Environment at the University of Lethbridge for hosting this year's conference. And by the way, we are still looking for a host institution for the 2022 meeting.

Notes from Executive Meetings

The WDCAG Executive met virtually over the year to ensure there was a continuity of business. The major item decided upon was to move the finances of the division from the University of Lethbridge where they have been looked after for over 10 years to the CAG Head Office. This has already simplified the running of the division and has allowed us to broaden representation on the Executive with the Secretary/Treasurer position no longer being required to be from Lethbridge. We appreciate the assistance from Kathryn Laferriere at CAG Head Office with this move and ongoing financial assistance.

Notes from the AGM

At the WDCAG conference, we also held our Annual General Meeting with good attendance. In addition to regular business, the attendees approved various reports from members of the executive, and approved the new executive (see below). Meeting participants also engaged in conversations around how to move the division forward in terms of activities it would like to see occur in addition to the annual meeting. These ideas will be discussed by the Executive at a future meeting. We also talked about the status and hosting of the WDCAG website. It was decided at the meeting to continue to host the WDCAG website at the University of Victoria with the support of Daniel Brendle-Moczuk (webmaster).

WDCAG Executive 2021-2022

The following comprises the Executive Committee for the WDCAG for the coming year.

- Past President – Claire Hay (UFV) (2021-2022)
- President – Craig Coburn (ULeth) (2021-2023)
- Vice-President – not required
- Secretary-Treasurer – Henry Frew, Carrick Consulting (2021-2023)
- Members-at-Large
 - Tom Waldichuck, TRU (2020-2022)
 - Joanne Moyer, Kings (2020-2022)
 - Terry Day, Okanagan College (2021-2023)
 - Julie Young, ULeth (2021-2023)
- Student Representatives (2-4)
 - Alberta – Nick Noad (ULeth), Sean Herrige-Berry (ULeth)
 - British Columbia – Melina Sorensen (RRU), Glen Thielmann (UNBC)
- Western Geography Human Editor –Joanne Moyer (Kings)
- Western Geography Physical/GIS Editor – Craig Coburn (ULeth)
- Archivist – vacant
- Awards Officer – David Jordan (TWU)
- BC Education Chair – Pam Shaw (VIU); Tom Waldichuk (TRU); Glenn Thielmann (UNBC)
- Newsletter Editor – Daniel Brendle-Moczuk (UVic)
- Webmaster – Daniel Brendle-Moczuk (UVic)